



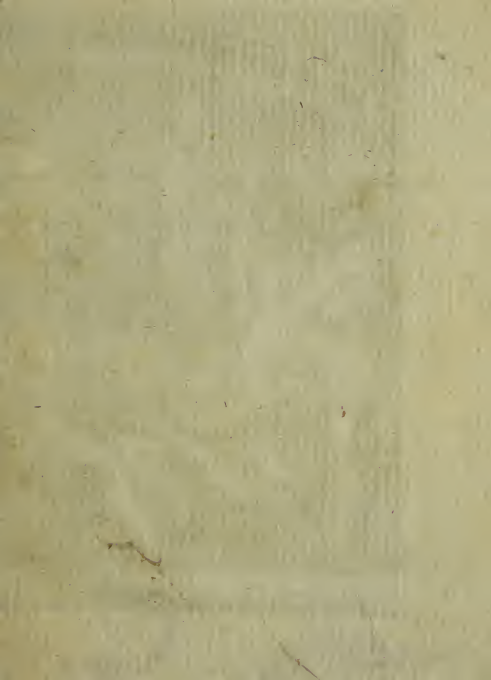


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THE
THIRD and FOURTH
VOYAGES
- OF -
COLUMBUS,
TO
AMERICA.

Faithfully translated from the Spanish.

R.B.

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THE
THIRD AND FOURTH
VOYAGES OF
COLUMBUS.

THE voyage which Columbus now meditated, was in a different course from any he had yet undertaken. The squadron under his command, consisted of six ships only, of no great burthen, and but indifferently supplied for a long and dangerous passage.

He was fully persuaded, that the fertile regions of India, lay to the south-west of those countries he had already discovered, and he proposed as the most certain method of finding these out, to stand directly South from the Canary Islands, until he came under the equinoctial line, and then to stretch for the west before the favorable wind for such a course, which blows invariably between the tropics. With this idea he set sail on the thirtieth of May, 1498, and touched first at the Canary, and then at the Cape de Verd Islands. From the former he dispatched three of his ships with a supply of provisions for the colony in Hispaniola, with the other three he continued his voyage towards the south,

On

On the nineteenth of July the sea was so calm, and at the same time the heat became so excessive, that many of their wine casks burst, the liquor in others soured, and their provisions corrupted. The Spaniards who had never before ventured so far to the south, began to conceive the reality of the system taught by the ancients, concerning the destructive qualities of that torrid region of the globe, and were in constant apprehension that their ships would take fire. However absurd this notion may appear now, the ancients persisted in their error long after they had begun to have commercial intercourse with several parts of India lying within the tropics; they were however relieved in some measure

from their fears by a fall of rain, which fell in such torrents for several hours, that the men with difficulty kept the deck; this, though extremely salutary did not greatly mitigate the intenseness of the heat.

The admiral who with his usual vigilance, had directed every operation, from the beginning of the voyage, was so much exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, that it brought on a violent fit of the gout, accompanied with a fever; this induced him to listen to the entreaties of his crew, and to alter his course to the north-west, in order to reach some of the Caribbee Islands, where he might refit, and lay in a stock of provisions.

On

On the first of August, the man stationed in the round-top, surprised them with the joyful cry of *land*;—They immediately stood towards it, and discovered a considerable Island, to which the Admiral gave the name of Trinidad, which it still retains. It lies on the coast of Guiana, near the mouth of the Orinoco. This, though a river of the third or fourth magnitude in the New World, far surpasses in size any in our hemispheres, Such a vast body of water rolls toward the ocean, and rushes into it with such impetuous force, that when it meets the tide, (which on that coast rises to an uncommon height,) their junction occasions an agitation of the waves no less surprising than formi-

dable. In this conflict, the irresistible torrent of the river so far prevails, that it freshens the ocean for many leagues with its flood. It was with the utmost difficulty Columbus escaped from these contending currents through a narrow strait, which appeared to him so tremendous, that he called it La Boca del Draco. His consternation had no sooner subsided, than he concluded, that so large a body of water could not be supplied by any Island, but must flow through a country of a very great extent, and he now congratulated himself upon having found that continent which had long been the object of his most ardent wishes to discover. Possessed of this idea, he stood to the west, along

the coast of those provinces, known by the names of Paria and Cumana, during which time he frequently landed, and had some intercourse with the people, who resembled the inhabitants of Hispaniola, both in their appearance and manner of living. They wore as ornaments, small plates of gold, and pearls of considerable value, which they willingly exchanged for European toys. They appeared to possess more courage than the inhabitants of the Islands, and the country produced quadrupeds, fowls, and fruits in great variety.—Columbus was so extremely delighted with the beauty and fertility of the country, that with the enthusiasm of a discoverer, he imagined this to be the terrestrial paradise

dise, which the Almighty chose for man while he remained in a state of innocence. The opinions Columbus seems to have formed concerning the countries he had now discovered, appear very singular.

The violent swell and agitation of the waters on the coast of Trinidad, led him to believe this to be the highest part of the terra queous globe, and he imagined that various circumstances concurred in proving that the sea was here visibly elevated. Having adopted this erroneous principle, the apparent beauty of the country induced him to adopt the idea of Sir John Mandeville, that the terrestrial paradise was the highest land on the earth ; and he believed he had been fortunate enough to discover this
happy

happy abode. The sagacity of Columbus is not however to be questioned, because he was influenced by so fabulous an author as Mandeville; Columbus, or any other discoverers were obliged to follow such guides as they could find; and it appears from several passages in the manuscript of Bernaldes, the friend of Columbus, that no inconsiderable degree of credit was given to the testimony of Mandeville in those days. Bernaldes frequently quotes him, and always with respect.

Columbus had now the glory of having discovered to mankind a New World, and made considerable progress towards a perfect knowledge of it.

The

The shattered condition of his ships, the scarcity of provision, his own infirmities, and the impatience of his crew, prevented him from making farther discoveries, and induced him to bear away for Hispaniola. In his way thither he discovered the Islands of Cubagua and Margareta, the latter of which became remarkable for its pearl fishery. On his arrival at Hispaniola, he found things in that state of anarchy as afforded him no prospect of enjoying that tranquillity which he stood so much in need of. His brother the adelantado, in consequence of the advice of Columbus, had removed the colony from Isabella, to the other side of the Island, where he laid the foundation of St. Domingo.

Whil

While the adelantado was employed in these useful measures, Francis Roldan, a man in whom Columbus had placed the greatest confidence, became the ring-leader of a mutinous party, and represented the Admiral and his brother, as ambitious of establishing an independent government, as a means of facilitating which, they meant to cut off part of the Spaniards by hunger and fatigue, that the remainder might be more easily reduced to subjection. Frivolous as these accusations were, they made great impression on the minds of his countrymen; and accordingly a considerable number took up arms against the adelantado, seized the magazine of provisions, and endeavored to surprise the fort at St, Domingo,

Domingo, in this adventure however, they failed, and the mutineers retired to the province of Xaragua. where they endeavoured to excite the Indians to throw off the yoke.

Such was the distracted state of the colony when Columbus landed at St. Domingo. He was astonished that the ships which he had sent from the Canaries had not yet arrived, which by the want of skill in the pilots, had been driven one hundred and sixty miles to the West of St. Domingo, and were obliged to shelter themselves in a harbour in the province of Xaragua, where Roldan and his followers had a station. Roldan carefully concealed his revolt

against

against the Adelantado from the commanders of the ships, and persuaded them to set on shore a considerable part of their new settlers they had brought over, that they might proceed by land to St. Domingo. These men were the refuse of the gaols of Spain, and they eagerly embraced a course of life which nearly resembled that which they had been accustomed to in their own country. The commanders of the ships perceived their error when it was too late, and immediately sailed for St. Domingo, where they arrived safe a few days after the Admiral, but their stock of provisions was so reduced, that they brought little relief to the colony.

Roldan was now become extremely formidable, and was no less extravagant in his demands ; Columbus however, was in no haste to take the field, but chose to negotiate rather than involve the country in a civil war, he caused a proclamation to be made offering free pardon to those who should return to their duty, and granting liberty, to all such as desired it to return to Spain. This allured all those, who from sickness or disappointment were disgusted with the country. By re-establishing Roldan in his former office he soothed his pride ; and by complying with most of his demands satisfied his avarice.

This

This insurrection prevented Columbus from prosecuting his discoveries on the continent, as self-preservation obliged him to keep near his person his brother, and the sailors whom he intended to have employed in that service. As soon as his affairs would permit, he sent some of his ships to Spain, with a journal of his voyage, and specimens of the gold and pearls which he had acquired by trafficking with the Indians. At the same time he transmitted to Spain an account of the late insurrection. Roldan did not omit sending to Spain by the same conveyance, a vindication of his conduct. Unfortunately for the honor of Spain, and the happiness of Columbus, the latter gained credit in the court of Ferdi-

nand and Isabella and produced unexpected events.

A large number of those who were dissatisfied with his administration, had embraced the opportunity of returning to Europe with the ships which he had sent from St. Domingo. The disappointment of their hopes enraged these adventurers to such malevolent degree, that whenever Ferdinand and Isabella appeared in public, they surrounded them in a tumultuous manner, insisted the payment of the arrears due to them and demanded vengeance upon the author of their sufferings.

Ferdinand was disposed to listen with a partial ear to those accusations. The
remittances

remittances from America had hitherto been so small, that they fell far short of defraying the expence of ships fitted out. Time had effaced the sensations of joy, which the discovery of a New World had occasioned, and the glory of the discovery was by no means sufficient to satisfy the narrow avaricious mind of Ferdinand. Even Isabella, who from the favorable opinion she had conceived of Columbus, had uniformly stood forth as his advocate, and had used her utmost endeavours to protect him from the slander of his enemies, was shaken by the number and boldness of his accusers, and began to suspect that a disaffection so general must proceed from real misconduct in the Admiral,

and that the grievances of his followers called for redress.

As soon as the enemies of Columbus perceived the alteration in the mind of Queen, they used their utmost address in augmenting her disgust, and a resolution fatal to Columbus was taken; which was, that Francis de Bovidilla, a knight of Calatrava, should be dispatched to Hispaniola, to enquire into the conduct of the Admiral, and if he should find the charge of mal-administration proved against him, immediately to assume the government of the Island. It was now the interest of the judge to condemn the accused, and Bovadilla discovered from his first landing on the Island, a disposi-

tion

tion to ruin Columbus. He took possession of the Admiral's house while he was absent, and seized his effects, as if his guilt had been already proved ; he likewise sent a summons to Columbus, ordering him to pay implicit obedience to his commands.

Deeply as the ingratitude of Ferdinand and Isabella affected Columbus, he did not hesitate a moment about his own conduct. He immediately went to the court of the violent and interested judge whom they had authorised to try him. Bovadilla, without suffering him to make any defence, ordered him instantly to be arrested, loaded with chains, and hurried on board a ship. That firmness of

mind, and astonishing fortitude which always distinguishes the character of Columbus, did not desert him, even in this humiliating situation ; he was conscious of his innocence and integrity, and reflecting on the great things he had achieved, bore his disgrace with the utmost composure. By granting various immunities to the colony, and by relaxing from that discipline which Columbus had maintained, and which he judged essentially necessary in order to preserve good order, Bovadilla had already rendered himself extremely popular and the adventurers, whom indigence or crime had driven from their native country, expressed the most perfect satisfaction at the imprisonment of Columbus ;

bus, and they flattered themselves that they should now enjoy the liberty of oppressing the inoffensive inhabitants without controul. No informers however infamous, were rejected, and the most inconsistent and improbable accusations were collected with the greatest avidity and transmitted to Spain: at the same time he ordered Columbus and his brother to be sent thither in fetters; not content with this inhuman treatment, which would disgrace the inhabitants of the most uncivilized nations, he added fresh cruelty to those accumulated insults already heaped upon his unfortunate prisoners, by ordering them to be confined in different ships, at the same time excluding them from the comfort arising

from that friendly intercourse which might have alleviated their common distress. One man however, still retained a proper sense of the services of Columbus, and felt the liveliest emotions of pity for one whose rank, age, and merit, entitled him to the highest veneration, Alonso de Valgo, the captain of the vessel on board of which Columbus was confined, as soon as he was clear off the Island, approached his prisoner with great respect, and offered to release him from the fetters with which he was so unjustly bound. “No” replied Columbus, “I wear these irons in consequence of an order from my sovereigns. They shall find me as obedient to this as I have been to their other injunctions.

By

By their orders am I confined, and their command alone shall set me free."

Fortunately the voyage to Spain was extremely short. Ferdinand and Isabella conceived what an impression their treatment of a man who had rendered them the most important services, would make on the minds of the people; they foresaw the indignation with which all Europe would be filled at this ungenerous treatment, nor did they doubt but they would exclaim against the ingratitude of Princes whose reign he had rendered illustrious. Ashamed of their conduct, they instantly issued orders to set Columbus at liberty, invited him to court, and remitted him money, that he

might appear there in a manner suitable to his rank. Columbus now immediately had audience of their majesties, and in a speech of some length vindicated his conduct, and produced such convincing proofs of his integrity, and of the malevolence of his enemies, who not satisfied with having deprived him of his fortune, were using their utmost endeavours to rob him of his honour and fame. Ferdinand received him with civility, and Isabella with respect. They disavowed any knowledge of what had happened, expressed their sorrow for it, and joined in promising him protection and future favor. But though they instantly degraded Bovadilla, in order to remove from themselves any suspicion
of

of having authorised his proceedings, they did not restore to Columbus his jurisdiction and privileges as viceroy of those countries he had discovered. That illiberal jealousy which prompted them to invest Bovadilla with power to treat the Admiral with such indignity still subsisted, although they were willing to appear his avengers. They were afraid to trust a man, to whom they were so highly indebted, and retaining him at court under various pretexts, they appointed Nicolas de Ovando, a knight of the military order of Alcantara, governor of Hispaniola.

The sensibility with which great minds feel every thing that implies sus-

picion

picion of their integrity is exquisite. Columbus was so deeply affected with this new injury, which came from the hands of those who pretended to be willing to make every reparation for his past sufferings, that he could no longer conceal the sentiments which this ungenerous conduct excited. Wherever he went, he carried about with him, as a memorial of their ingratitude, those fetters with which he had been loaded. They were constantly hung up in his chamber, and he gave orders that when he died they should be buried with him.

After remaining at the court of Spain near two years, he found it impossible to remove the prejudices of Ferdinand ;

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he urged the claim of justice, consequently his claim was rejected by a Prince who was destitute of almost every virtue.

To open a new passage to the East Indies, was his first and favorite scheme, and which he had still the courage to execute, notwithstanding all that he had already suffered. He conceived an opinion that, beyond the continent of America, there was a sea that extended to the East Indies, and hoped to find some strait or neck of land by which a communication might be gained with it and that part of the ocean already known.

This strait or Isthmus he conjectured to be situated near the gulf of Darien.

Full

Full of this idea, though 'he was now at an advanced age, he offered with alacrity to undertake a voyage which would ascertain this important point, and pursue the grand scheme, which from the beginning he proposed to accomplish. Ferdinand and Isabella lent a favorable ear to this proposal ; and several circumstances united to form this disposition in them.

Men of science in that age were fully persuaded that the countries which Columbus had discovered were connected with the East Indies, and particularly Bernaldes, the Cuna de los Palacios, who seems to have attained considerable proficiency in the knowledge of

cosmography

cosinagraphy. He contended that Cuba was not an Island, but a part of the continent, and united to the dominions of the great Khan. He delivered this opinion to Columbus himself, who was his guest for some time on his return from his second voyage ; and supported it by several arguments, mostly founded on the authority of Sir John Mandeville. Antonia Gallo, who was secretary to the magistracy of Genoa towards the close of the fifteenth century, published a short account of the navigations and discoveries of his countryman Columbus, in which he informs us, that from letters of Columbus which he himself had seen, that it was his opinion, founded on nautical observations, that

one of the Islands he had discovered, was distant only thirty miles from Cattigara, which in the charts of the geographers of that age, was laid down upon the authority of Ptolemy, as the most Easterly place in Asia. From this he concluded, that if some unknown continent did not obstruct the navigation, there must be a short and easy access, by holding a Westerly course, to this extreme region of the East.

They were likewise glad to have this opportunity of removing from court, a man with whose demands they thought it impossible to comply, and whose presence continually reminded them of their ingratitude. From their experience of

his

his abilities, they had reason to give credit to his conjectures, and to confide in his success. To these considerations must be added a still more powerful evidence. About this time the Portuguese fleet, under the command of Cabral, arrived from the Indies; and the value of its cargo, gave the people of Europe a more perfect idea than they had hitherto formed of the opulence and fertility of the East.

The Portuguese had been more fortunate than the Spaniards. Their first voyage to the East, had yielded immediate, as well as vast returns of profit, in commodities extremely precious, and in great request. Lisbon became immediately

mediately the seat of commerce and of wealth; while Spain had only the remote prospect of future benefit.

The court of inquisition, which effectually checks a spirit of liberal enquiry, and every species of literary improvement, wherever it is established, was unknown in Portugal in the fifteenth century, when the people of that Kingdom began their voyages of discovery. More than a century had elapsed, before it was established by John III. whose reign commenced in the year one thousand, five hundred, and twenty-one,

Nothing could be more acceptable to the Spainards than the offer of Columbus

to conduct them to the East by a route which he expected to be shorter as well as less dangerous, than that which the Portuguese had taken. Even the apathy of the inactive Ferdinand, seemed roused by this proposal, and he warmly approved of the undertaking.

Interesting as this discovery was to the nation, Columbus could procure but four small barks, the largest of which did not exceed seventy tons in burden. Accustomed to brave danger, and to engage in arduous undertakings with inadequate force, he did not hesitate to accept the command of this pitiful squadron. His brother Bartholomew,

and

and his second son, Ferdinand, the historian of his actions accompanied him.

On the ninth day of May, one thousand, five hundred, and two, he set sail from Spain, and touched, as usual at the Canary Islands ; from thence he purposed to have stood directly for the continent, but his largest vessel was so clumsy and unfit for service, that he was obliged to bear away for Hispaniola, in hopes of changing her for some ship of the fleet which had carried out Ovando.

When he arrived off St. Domingo, he found eighteen of these ships ready loaded and on the point of departing for Spain

Spain. Columbus immediately acquainted the governor with the destination of his voyage, and the accident which had obliged him to alter his course he requested permission to enter the harbor, not only that he might negotiate the exchange of his ship, but that he might take shelter from a violent hurricane, the approach of which he discovered from various prognostics, which his experience and sagacity had taught him to observe. On that account, he advised him likewise to put off for some days the departure of the fleet bound for Spain. Ovando, not only denied his request, but scorned his advice. Under circumstances in which humanity would have afforded refuge to a stranger,

Columbus

Columbus was denied admittance into a country of which he had discovered the existence, and acquired the possession. His salutary warning which merited the strictest attention, was regarded as the dream of a visionary prophet, who arrogantly pretended to predict an event, beyond the reach of human foresight. The fleet sailed for Spain. Next night the hurricane came on with dreadful intensity; Columbus being aware of the danger, took the necessary precautions against it and preserved his little squadron. The fleet destined for Spain met with the fate which the obstinacy of its commanders deserved. Of eighteen ships, two or three only escaped.

In this general wreck perished Bovadilla, Roldan, and the greater part of those who had been most active in persecuting Columbus and oppressing the Indians. Together with themselves all the wealth which they had amassed by their injustice and inhumanity was swallowed up. Its value amounted to more than two hundred thousand pesos; an immense sum at that period, and sufficient, not only to have screened them from any severe scrutiny into their proceedings, but to have secured them a gracious reception in the Spanish court. Among the ships that escaped, one had on board all the effects of Columbus which had been recovered from the ruins of his fortune. Historians, struck with

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the exact discrimination of characters, as well as the just distribution of rewards and punishments conspicuous in those events, universally attribute them to an immediate interposition of Providence, in order to avenge the injuries of a man, who sought in vain for redress from the hands who ought from their obligations to him, to have made his cause their own. The ignorant and superstitious, who were witnesses to this event, attributed it to a different cause. From an opinion, which vulgar admiration is apt to entertain with respect to persons who have distinguished themselves for their sagacity; they were now convinced that Columbus was possessed of supernatural powers, and imagined he had conjured

up this storm by magical art, to be revenged of his enemies.

Columbus soon quitted Hispaniola, highly disgusted with the inhospitable reception he had met with, and stood immediately for the continent. After a tedious and dangerous voyage, he discovered Guanaia, an Island but a small distance from the coast of Honduras. There he had an interview with some of the inhabitants, who arrived in a large canoe. They appeared to be more enlightened and civilized than any he had hitherto discovered. In return to the enquiries of the Spaniards, made with their usual eagerness concerning the places from which they got the gold

which they wore as ornaments, they directed them to countries situated to the West, in which gold was found in such profusion, that it was applied to the most common purposes. Instead of steering in quest of a country so inviting, which would have conducted him along the coast of Yucatan to the rich empire of Mexico, Columbus was so intent upon his favorite scheme of finding out the strait, which he supposed communicated with the Indian ocean, that he bore away to the East, towards the gulf of Darien.

He discovered in this navigation, all the coast of the continent, from Cape Gracios a Dios, to an harbour, which on account of its beauty and security, he
called

Porto Bello. He searched in vain for the imaginary strait, through which he expected to make his way into an unknown sea; and though he went on shore several times, and advanced into the country, he did not penetrate so far as to cross the narrow isthmus which separates the gulf of Mexico, from the great Southern ocean. He was so delighted with the appearance of the country, which every where presented to the eye, prospects, at once grand and picturesque, and conceived such an idea of its wealth, from the specimens of gold produced by the natives, that he resolved to leave a small colony upon the river Belum, in the province Veragua, under the command of his brother, and to

return himself to Spain in order to procure necessaries to make it a permanent establishment.

Columbus was however deprived of the honor of planting the first colony on the continent of America, by the ungovernable spirit of his crew: their insolence and rapaciousness, provoked the natives to take arms, and as there were a more handy and warlike race of men than the inhabitants of the islands, the Spaniards found it impossible to cope with an enemy whose numbers were so far superior to their own, and who took every opportunity of surprising and cutting them off; in these skirmishes they took several prisoners, Columbus therefore

therefore after having in vain endeavored to recover them, determined to abandon a station which he found untenable.

The fate of Prisoners who fall into the hands of the American Indians, is truly to be lamented, if the war has been carried on at any distance from their habitations, on their return homewards the prisoners are treated with some degree of humanity; as they approach their own frontier, some of their numbers are dispatched to inform their countrymen of their success; 'tis then they begin to feel the wretchedness to which they are reduced. The women of the village together with the youths who are not arrived at an age to bear arms,

arms, assemble, and forming themselves into two lines, through which the prisoners must pass, they bruize and beat them with sticks and stones in the most cruel manner, After this first gratification of their rage against their enemies they pour forth dreadful lamentations for the loss of their own countrymen who have fallen in the battle, accompanied by words and actions which seem to express the most poignant anguish. But in a moment, upon a signal given, their tears cease, and they pass with a sudden and unaccountable transition from the depth of sorrow, to transports of joy ; and begin to celebrate the victory, with all the wild exultations of savage triumph. The fate of the prisoner

remains still undecided. The old men deliberate concerning it. Some are condemned to be tortured to death, in order to satiate the revenge of the conquerors; some to replace the members which the society had lost in that or former wars. Those who are reserved for this milder fate, are led to the huts of those who had any of their friends killed. The women meet them at the door, and if they permit them to enter, their sufferings are at an end, adopted as one of the family, and in their own phrase, are seated upon the mat of the deceased. They assume his name, hold the same rank, and are treated henceforward as a father, a brother, a husband or a friend, but if either from caprice
or

or the unrelenting desire of revenge, the women of any of the family refuse to give the prisoner admission, his doom is irrevocably fixed ; no power can save him from torture and death. This appears to be the only liberty granted to the females of America, who in every other respect are treated in a manner shocking to humanity.

While their lot is in suspense, the prisoners appear totally indifferent to the fate that may attend them. They talk eat, sleep, and appear as perfectly at their ease, as if no danger was impending. When the fatal sentence is pronounced to them, they receive it with an unaltered countenance, begin their death

song,

song; and prepare to die like men who regard death with the utmost contempt. The conquerors assemble as to a solemn festival, resolved to put the fortitude of the prisoner to the severest tart. A scene ensues, the bare description of which is sufficient to chill the heart of men with horror, who accustomed to milder institutions, are taught to regard mercy as one of the principal ornaments of nature.

The prisoners are tied naked to a stake but in such a manner that they have the liberty of moving round it; all who are present, men, women, and children, rush like furies on the devoted victim, and apply every torture rancor or re-

venge

venge can invent. Some burn their limbs, some mangle their bodies while others tear their flesh from their bones, pluck out their nails by the roots, and rend and twist their sinews. They vie with each other in refinements of torture, nor is there any thing which sets bounds to their rage, but the fear of the abridging the life of the unhappy sufferer; and such is their ingenuity in tormenting, that by carefully avoiding to injure any vital part, they often prolong this scene of anguish for many days,

Amidst this complication of sufferings, the victims continue to chaunt their death-song with a firm voice, and boasting of their own exploits, insult

them

them with their inability of avenging their deceased friend, excite their ferocity by every provocation in their power, frequently telling them they knew not how to torture.

To display unshaken fortitude in such trying situations is the noblest triumph of an American warrior. To avoid the trial by a voluntary death, or to shrink when under it in the most trifling degree is deemed infamous; if any one betrays symptoms of timidity, his tormentors often dispatch him at one blow, with contempt, as unworthy of being treated like a man. Animated with these ideas they bear without shewing the least impatience, what it seems impossible for human nature to sustain; they appear

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not only insensible to pain, but to court it. "Forbear" said an aged chief of the Iroquois, when his insults had provoked one of his tormentors to wound him with a knife, "forbear those stabs of your knife, and rather let me die by fire, that those dogs your allies, from beyond the sea, may learn by my example to suffer like men."

This magnanimity, of which there are frequent instances among the Americans, instead of exciting admiration, or calling forth sympathy, exasperates the spirits of their torturers and urges them to new acts of barbarity; weary at length of contending with men, whose constancy of mind they cannot vanquish

some

some chief in a rage puts an end to their existence by dispatching them with a dagger or a club.

This barbarous scene is after succeeded by one no less shocking. As the revenge which rages in the bosom of a savage is ungovernable and insatiable, they frequently devour those unhappy people who have been sacrificed to their cruelty ; among the Iroquois, the phrase by which they express their determination of going to war with an enemy is, "Let us go and eat that nation." If they solicit the aid of a neighbouring tribe, they invite them to "eat some broth made of the flesh of their enemies.

In South America, the people gratify their revenge in a manner less shocking. On a day appointed, the victorious tribe assemble, the prisoner is brought forth with great solemnity, he views the preparations for the sacrifice with as much indifference as if he was not the victim, and meeting his fate with undaunted firmness is dispatched with a single blow. The moment he falls, the women seize the body, and dress it for the feast. They besmear their children with the blood, in order to kindle in their bosoms a hatred for their enemies, which is never extinguished, and all of them feed on the flesh with amazing greediness and exultation. They consider the power of devouring their enemies, the
most

most complete and exquisite gratification of revenge. Columbus whose humanity was always conspicuous, deplored the fate of his unhappy countrymen, who were destined to suffer, though less capable than the Americans, all the cruelties recounted in the foregoing relation.

This was not the only misfortune which befel Columbus ; - it was followed by the numerous disasters to which navigation is exposed. Furious hurricanes, attended by violent storms of thunder and light'ning, which every instant threatened his leaky vessels with destruction ; while his discontented crew exhausted with fatigue, and destitute of provisions, were unwilling or unab'le to

execute his commands. The shattered condition of his ships rendered them unfit any longer to encounter the tempests to which they were exposed, and although Columbus endeavoured by every means he could suggest to prevent them from sinking, he could not prevent one of them from experiencing that calamity, and was obliged to abandon another as unfit for service; and with the two that remained he quitted that part of the coast, which in his anguish he called the coast of Vexation, and bore away for Hispaniola. New distresses awaited him in this voyage; he was driven back from the coast of Cuba; during a violent gale his ships were driven against each other, the power of the waves

waves rendering it impossible to steer them ; they were so much damaged by this shock, that it was with the utmost difficulty they reached Jamaica, where he was obliged to run them on shore to prevent them from sinking.

Every thing now conspired to render the situation of Columbus distressing in the greatest degree ; he was cast ashore upon an Island at a considerable distance from the only settlement of the Spaniards in America. His ships were ruined beyond the possibility of reparation. to convey an account of their situation to Hispaniola appeared impracticable ; and without this, it was impossible to expect relief. His genius, fertile in resources, and most vigorous in those

perilous extremities when feeble minds abandon themselves to despair, discovered to him the only expedient which afforded them the least prospect of relief. He had recourse to the hospitable kindness of the natives, who considering the Spaniards as beings of a superior nature were eager on every occasion to administer to their wants. He obtained from them two of their canoes, each formed out of the trunk of a tree hollowed with fire, and so mis-shapen and awkward as hardly to merit the name of boats. In these, which were fit only for creeping along the coast, or crossing from one side of a bay to another, Mendez a Spaniard, and Fies-chi a Genoese, two gentlemen particularly attached to

Columbus

Columbus, gallantly offered to set out for Hispaniola, upon a voyage of above thirty leagues. This they accomplished in ten days, after surmounting incredible difficulties and enduring such fatigue that several of the Indians who accompanied them sunk under it and died.

Ovando, from a mean jealousy of Columbus, paid to them neither the respect they merited, nor the distress of the persons from whom they came required. He at first refused them permission to set foot on the Island, and after he granted it, Mendez and Fieschi spent eight months in soliciting relief for their commander and his associates without any prospect of obtaining it.

During this period of adversity, various passions agitated the mind of Columbus, and his associates. At first the expectation of a speedy deliverance from the success of Mendez and Fieschi's voyage, cheered the spirits of the most desponding. After some time the more timorous began to suspect that they had failed in their daring attempt; and at length the most sanguine concluded they had perished. The ray of hope which had lately illumined their minds now became so languid that it was scarce sufficient to support their drooping spirits. Tired out with fruitless expectation, despair, heightened by disappointment settled in every breast; their last resource had failed, and nothing now remained to
them

them but the prospect of ending their days in a savage country far from their relatives and friends. The seamen in a transport of rage mutined, and threatened the life of Columbus, whom they reproached as the author of all their calamities, seized ten canoes, which he had purchased from the Indians, and despising his remonstrances and entreaties, made off with them to a distant part of the Island. The natives tired with the long residence of the Spaniards, murmured at the quantity of provisions they consumed. As their industry was not greater than that of their neighbours in Hispaniola, like them they found the burden of supporting so many strangers intolerable.

As game and fish are the principal food of the inhabitants, all they aim at by cultivation, is to supply any occasional defect in these. They confined their industry to rearing a few plants, which in a rich soil and warm climate, were easily trained to maturity. The chief of these is *maize*, well known in Europe by the name of Indian corn, a grain extremely prolific, of simple culture, agreeable to the taste, and affording strong and hardy nourishment. The second is the *manioc*, which grows to the size of a large shrub, or small tree, and produces roots somewhat resembling parsnips. After carefully squeezing out the juice, these roots are grated to a fine powder, and formed into thin cakes, called

called cassada bread, which though insipid to the taste, proves no contemptible food. As the juice of the manioc is a potent poison, some authors have celebrated the ingenuity of the Americans, in converting a poisonous plant into wholesome nourishment. It should however be rather considered as one of the desperate resources for procuring subsistence, to which necessity oft reduces the inhabitants of the rude nations : or perhaps they were led to the use of it by a progress, in which there is nothing marvellous. One species of manioc, is entirely free from any poisonous quality, and may be eaten without any preparation, except that of roasting it in the embers. This it is probable was the first
used

used by the Americans as food; and necessity having gradually taught them to separate the pernicious juice from the other species, they have found it to be more prolific, as well as more nourishing than the other.

The third is the *plantain*, which, tho' it grows to the height of from six to ten feet, is of such quick growth, that in less than a year it abundantly rewards the cultivation with fruits. It is of an agreeable flavour, and when baked differs little in taste from a roasted apple.

The fourth is the *yarn*, which when arrived at maturity is both wholesome and palatable, and when boiled is an excellent substitute for bread.

The

The fifth is a sweet kind of potatoe, the qualities of which, nearly resemble those of Europe.

The sixth is *pimento*, a small tree, yielding a strong aromatic spice. The Americans, who like other inhabitants of warm climates, delight in whatever is hot, and of a poignant flavour, deem this seasoning a necessary of life, and mingle large quantities of it in every kind of food they take. The foregoing were however, cultivated so sparingly, that they hardly raised sufficient for their own consumption. Two circumstances common to all the savage nations of America, concurred with those already mentioned, not only in rendering their agriculture imperfect, but in limiting
their

their powers in all their operations. They had no tame animals; and they were unacquainted with the useful metals, consequently all their agriculture utensils were made of stone or wood, and those so very awkward that they were of very little service.

In other parts of the world, man in his rudest state, appears as lord of the creation, giving laws to various tribes of animals, which he has tamed and reduced to subjection. The tartar follows his prey on the horse he has reared; or tends his numerous flocks, which supply him with food and clothing; the Arab, has not only rendered the horse, but the camel docile, and avails himself of their persevering strength; the
Laplander

Laplander has formed the rein-deer to be subservient to his will ; and even the people of Kamtschatka have trained their dogs to labour. This command over the brute creation, is one of the noblest prerogatives of man; and ranks among the greatest efforts of his wisdom and power. Without this his dominion is incomplete ; he is a monarch who has no subjects ; a master without servants, and must perform every operation by the strength of his own arm. Most of the animals rendered domestic on the European continent, were unknown to America, but there are some common to both. The rein-deer which has been broken to the yoke in the one hemisphere, enjoys its liberty in the fullest extent

extent in the other. The native animals of the American continent, are neither so fierce nor so formidable as to have exempted them from servitude. The *Bison* of the New World is evidently of the same species with the horned cattle of Europe; the latter even among the rudest nations of our hemisphere have been rendered domestic; the Indians for want of the abovementioned necessaries, so absolutely requisite for the operations of agriculture, began to furnish the Spaniards with a sparing hand and threatened to withdraw those supplies altogether. Such a resolution must have proved quickly fatal to the Spaniards. Their safety depended on the good-will of the Indians; and unless
they

they could revive the admiration and reverence with which that simple people had at first beheld them, destruction was inevitable.

Though the licentiousness of the mutineers had, in great measure effaced those impressions, which had been so favorable to the Spaniards. The ingenuity of Columbus, suggested a happy artifice, that not only restored, but heightened the high opinion the Indians had originally conceived of them.

By his skill in astronomy, he knew that there would shortly be a total eclipse of the moon. He assembled all the principle people of the district about him on the day before it happened, and reproaching them for their fickleness in withdrawing

withdrawing their affection and assistance from men whom they had lately revered, he told them that the Spaniards were servants of the Great Spirit, who dwells in Heaven, who made and governs the world ; that he, offended at their refusing to support men who were objects of his peculiar care, was preparing to punish them in the most exemplary manner, and that very night the moon should withhold her light, and appear the colour of blood, as a sign of the divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall on them. To this marvellous prediction some listened with careless indifference peculiar to the natives of America, others with credulous astonishment natural to minds unenlightened

by

by philosophy. But when the moon began gradually to be darkened, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were struck with terror and astonishment. A consultation now took place among their chiefs, and they all agreed in believing the Spaniards to be a superior race of beings whom it was their duty to obey. The inhabitants instantly ran to their huts in the greatest consternation, and returned to Columbus loaded with provisions, which they threw at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit to avert the destruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, seeming to be moved by their entreaties, promised to comply with their desire. The eclipse went off, the moon recover-

ed

ed her splendor, and from that day the Spaniards were not only profusely supplied with provisions, but the natives with superstitious attention, carefully avoided giving them any offence.

During these transactions, the mutineers had made repeated attempts to pass over to Hispaniola, but either from their own misconduct, or the violence of the winds and currents, their efforts were all unsuccessful. Enraged at this disappointment, they marched toward that part of the Island where Columbus remained, offering him new insults, and threatening him with new danger.

While they were advancing an event happened, more cruel and afflicting than any he had apprehended from them.

The

The governor of Hispaniola, whose mind was still filled with some dark suspicions of Columbus, sent a small bark to Jamaica not to deliver his distressed countrymen, but to spy out their condition ; and lest the sympathy of those he employed should afford them relief, contrary to his intention, he gave the command of this vessel to Escobar, an inveterate enemy of Columbus, who adhering to his instructions with malignant accuracy, cast anchor at some distance from the Island ; they then approached the shore in a small boat, observed the wretched plight of the Spaniards, delivered a letter full of empty compliments to the Admiral, received his answer and then departed.

When

When the Spainards first descried the vessel standing towards the Island, every heart glowed with exultation, fully persuaded that the long expected hour of their deliverance was at hand. As the degree of sorrow is generally proportioned to the idea we had conceived of joy, the situation of the Spaniards was truly deplorable, by having thus in one instant been disappointed in their most darling hopes ; the most sanguine now gave themselves up to despair ; Columbus alone, though he felt sensibly the wanton insult of Ovando, retained such composure of mind, as to be able to cheer his followers. He assured them that Mendez and Fieschi, had reached Hispaniola in safety ; that they would

speedily

speedily procure ships to carry them off but as Escobar's vessel could not take them all on board, that he had refused to go with him because he had determined never to abandon the faithful companions of his distress. Soothed with the expectation of a speedy deliverance, and delighted in his apparent generosity in attending more to their preservation than his own, their spirits revived, and he regained their confidence.

Without this confidence he could not have resisted the mutineers, who were now at hand. All his endeavours to reclaim those desperadoes had no effect but to encrease their fury. Their demands every day became more extravagant, and their intentions more violent and bloody. The common safety

D

rendered

rendered it necessary to oppose them by open force ; but Columbus, who had been long afflicted with the gout could not take the field. His brother the Adelantado, marched against them and they quickly met. The mutineers rejected with scorn terms of accomodation, which were once more offered them, and rushed on boldly to the attack. They opposed an enemy not unprepared to meet them. In the first onset several of their leaders were slain. The Adelantado, whose courage was equal to his strength, closed with their captain, wounded, disarmed and took him prisoner. At sight of this the rest fled with a dastardly fear, suitable to their former insolence. Soon after they submitted

in a body to Columbus, bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to obey his commands. Tranquility had not been many days restored, when the ships appeared in sight, whose arrival Columbus had promised with such address, though he could foresee it with little certainty. The Spaniards quitted an Island with transports of joy, in which the unfeeling jealousy of Ovando had suffered them to languish above a year, exposed to misery in all its various forms.

When they arrived at St. Domingo, the governor, with the mean artifice of a vulgar mind, that labours to atone for insolence by servility, fawned on the man whose greatness he envied, and who he had contrived every means in his

D 2

power

power to ruin. He received Columbus with the most studied respect, lodged him in his own house, and distinguished him with all the marks of honor. But amidst this over-acted civility, he could not conceal the envy and malignity that centered in his heart. He gave liberty to the captain of the mutineers, whom Columbus had brought in chains to be tried for his crimes, and threatened such as had adhered to the Admiral with a judicious enquiry into their conduct. Columbus submitted in silence to what he could not redress; but discovered extreme impatience to leave a country which was under the jurisdiction of a man, who had always treated him with injustice and inhumanity become intolerable. His preparations were soon finished, and he sailed
for

for Spain with two ships on the 12th of September, 1504. Disasters similar to those which had attended him thro' life, continued to pursue him to the end of his career. One of the vessels being disabled, was forced back to St. Domingo, the other shattered by violent storms, sailed 700 leagues under jury masts, and reached with difficulty the port of St. Lucas.

There he received the account of an event, the most fatal that could have befallen him, and which completed his misfortunes. This was the death of his patroness the Queen Isabella, in whose justice, humanity, and favor he confided as his last resources. None now remained to redress his wrongs, or to reward his sufferings and services, but Ferdinand, who

had so long opposed, and so often injured him. To solicit a prince thus prejudiced against him was a situation no less irksome than humiliating. In this however was Columbus doomed to employ the close of days so many of which had been devoted to the service of the man whose humble suppliant he then was, but Ferdinand was void of gratitude, and the brilliant character of Columbus served rather to heighten his envy than create his esteem. As soon as his health would permit, he repaired to court, and tho' he was received there with civility barely decent, he presented petition after petition to Ferdinand, demanding the punishment of his oppressors, and the restitution of all the privileges bestowed upon him
by

by the capitulation of 1492. Ferdinand amused him with fair words and empty promises. Instead of granting his claims he proposed expedients to elude them, and spun out the affair with such apparent art, as plainly discovered he never meant it should be terminated. The declining health of Columbus, flattered Ferdinand with the hopes of being soon delivered from an importunate suitor, and encouraged him to persevere in his illiberal plan. Nor was he deceived in his expectations. Disgusted with the ingratitude of a monarch whom he had served with such fidelity and success, exhausted with the fatigue which he had endured, and broken with the infirmities which these brought on him, he ended his life

in

in Valadolid, on the 20th of May, in 1506, in the 59th year of his age.

He died with a composure of mind suitable to the magnanimity which distinguished his character, and with sentiments of piety becoming the supreme respect for religion which he manifested in every occurrence of his life.

As every monument of such a man as Columbus is valuable, the following letter written by him to Ferdinand and Isabella is inserted, as it exhibits a striking picture of his humanity, prudence, intrepidity, public spirit, and courteous address. It appears to have been after he had escaped from great danger, and when on his first voyage.

“ I would have been less concerned for this misfortune, had I alone been in danger, both because my life is a debt I owe to the supreme Creator, and because I have at other times been exposed to the most imminent hazard. But what gave me infinite grief and vexation, was, that after God had given me faith to undertake this enterprize, in which I had been so successful, that my opponents would have been convinced, and the glory of your highnesses, and the extent of your territory increased by me, it should please the divine Majesty to stop all by my death. All this would have been more tolerable had it not been attended with the loss of those men whom I had carried with me upon promise of the greatest prosperity

rity, who seeing themselves in such distress, cursed not only their coming along with me, but that fear and awe of me, which prevented them from returning as they after resolved to have done. But besides all this, my sorrow was encreased by recollecting I had left my two sons at school at Condova, destitute of friends in a foreign country, when it could not in all probability be known that I had done such services as might induce your highnesses to remember them. And though I comforted myself with the faith that our Lord would not permit that, what tended so much to the glory of his church, and what I had brought about with so much trouble, to remain imperfect, yet I considered that on account of my sins it

was his will to deprive me of that glory which I might have attained in this world. While in this confused state, I thought on the good fortune that attends your highnesses, and imagined, that altho' I should perish, and the vessel be lost, it was possible you might come to a knowledge of my voyage, and the success with which it was attended. For that reason I wrote upon parchment with the brevity which the situation required, that I had discovered the lands which I promised, in how many days I had done it, and what course I followed. I mentioned the goodness of the country, the character of the inhabitants, and that your highnesses subjects were left in possession of all I had discovered. Having sealed the

writing

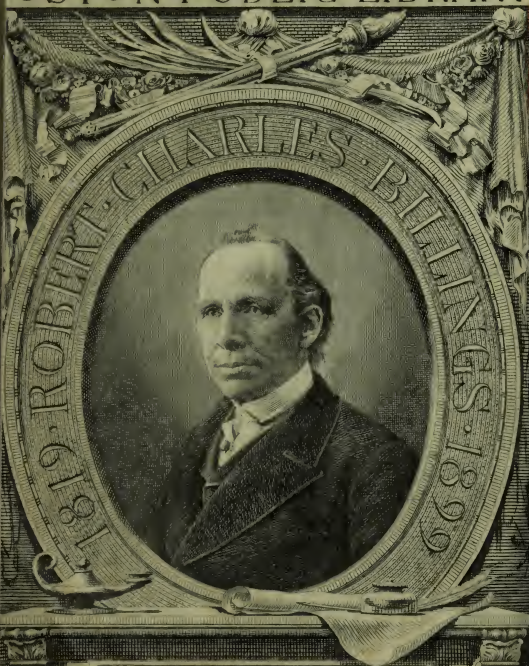
writing I addressed it to your highnesses, and promised 1000 ducats to any person who should deliver it sealed, so that if any foreigner found it, the promised reward might prevail upon them not to give the information to another. I then caused a large cask to be brought to me, and wrapping up the parchment in an oiled cloth, and afterwards in a cake of wax, I put in the cask and having stopped it well, cast it in the sea. All the men believed it was an act of devotion. Imagining that this might never chance to be taken up, I made another packet like the former, and placed it at the top of the poop, so that if the ship sunk, the cask remaining above water, might be committed to the guidance of fortune."

F I N I S.

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